

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday July 23rd, 2023

Galway Radio Club support the Joyce County Challenge

Paul EI5IPB reports that Galway Radio Club supported the Joyce County Challenge. On Saturday July 15th, the Galway Radio Club involving Tom EI3ER, Gerry EI8EXB, Joe EI3HM, and Paul EI5IPB provided radio support for thirty-five walkers in the Joyce County Challenge. This is a 30-kilometre walking challenge around the mountain ridges at Lough Nafooeey taking up to twelve hours to complete depending on the weather. The challenge walk started at 6:30 a.m. and completed this year at 7 p.m. due to the terrible weather. Radio support was extremely important as there is little mobile coverage in some of the areas and the terrain can be very difficult. Three checkpoints were manned with all communicating back to a base station where the organizers were kept up to date on overall progress. The Galway Mountain Rescue Team was also on hand, and the radio club liaised between the organizers and the mountain rescue team as needed. All radio communications were done on VHF using a mixture of handhelds (two per checkpoint) with a Yaesu Dual Band FT-8800 transceiver at the base station. The FT-8800 was tuned in to a general frequency used for normal communications with a second frequency tuned in to the Mountain Rescue Team just in case. The weather was terrible with almost non-stop rain and very strong winds - this was a real test of both the walkers and the temporary antenna erected for the event. Thankfully everything went well on the day and all walkers got back safely to the base station.

Update from IRTS Contest Manager Mark EI6JK

IRTS Contest Manager Mark EI6JK reports that the VHF/UHF Field Day results are now published on www.irts.ie/results. In total, sixteen logs were received for the five VHF/UHF Field Day contests held over the first weekend of July. Contest stations were in counties Longford, Mayo, Louth, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork. Conditions were variously described as "OK", "reasonable", and "tough going". Nevertheless, some good DX was worked on all five bands. In particular, timely Sporadic E propagation provided some good openings on the 6m band. Mark continues with a reminder that the IOTA contest is just one week away. A lot of Irish records are there for the taking and there are IRTS trophies up for grabs in some categories. There is always big participation from Ireland. Shannon Basin Radio Club is going again to Inishbofin Island to activate EU121. Other EI contest groups are doing multi-op categories. The contest starts at 1 p.m. local time on Saturday 29th and finishes twenty-four hours later. Good luck to everyone.

Collective Communications at the National Steam Rally

The place to be this coming August Bank Holiday weekend is Stradbally Hall for the 59th National Steam Rally and Collective Communications' next activation. EI3CC will be there on August 6th and 7th with their mobile Radio Communication Unit, interactive displays, new Icom 7300 rig, and a warm welcome for all. They'll be active on the HF bands so if you can't join them, please call them. They will post specific frequencies and times on Facebook. Stradbally Hall is about ten minutes east of Portlaoise along the N80 and is the same location as last year's Electric Picnic. Come and meet the crew who you've been hearing so much about. Bring the family too and enjoy a day at an event that holds national acclaim. Whether you watch, join in, or just absorb the ambiance, you'll be very welcome. If you're curious to see what EI3CC has been up to recently, visit their QRZ.com page.

Eirpak Packet Radio Network in the Midlands

The resurgence of interest in packet radio and making 1200 and 9600 baud communications cool again has continued in recent weeks. A terrestrial amateur radio packet network is now established in the midlands region of Ireland. Called the Eirpak network, it operates on 144.950 MHz using 1200 baud packet radio. Any operators interested in knocking the dust off any packet modems in the shack and trying to connect or even extend the network is very welcome. In fact, you don't even need a hardware modem to get involved; a very popular software-based terminal node controller called Direwolf can be used to get you active on packet and automatic packet reporting system (APRS). In addition to this, Shannon Basin Radio Club members are continuing with a construction project focusing on a new version of a packet modem called the NinoTNC. Further information about the NinoTNC kit can be found at www.tarpn.net Each Sunday from 8 p.m., anyone interested in learning more is invited to meet via the club's repeater, EI2SBR, to discuss progress. Further information can be also found via the club's social media channels.

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group EI2WRC Meeting Reminder

This is a reminder that the July meeting of the South Eastern Amateur Radio Group EI2WRC will take place on Monday the 31st of July 2023 at 8 p.m. sharp at the New Community Men's Shed, Ozanam Centre, Coffee House Lane, Waterford. New members, or anyone interested in learning more about amateur radio or the group are as always very welcome to attend. For anyone wishing to find out more about the South Eastern Amateur Radio Group and their activities you can email them at [southeasternarg /at/ gmail.com](mailto:southeasternarg/at/gmail.com) or please feel free to go along to any of their meetings. Their website is www.searg.ie and you can also find them on Facebook and /at/ seargnews on Twitter.

Tropospheric Ducting Forecast

There are early signs of potential tropospheric ducting or a lift on the 2m and possibly 70cm bands towards the end of the week. The strength may range from marginal to fair but will

cover a large part of Ireland and the U.K. It may be worth testing if you can access repeaters beyond your normal range and experiment with 2m SSB or digital modes.

Solar Activity Update

The region of time around the peak of the eleven-year solar cycle is generally associated with excellent propagation but it's not always good news. In recent days, the HF bands have been suffering the drawbacks of a very active sun. A recent solar storm emitting vast jets of charged particles caused yet another radio blackout and an increase in noise on the HF bands. Another active sun region just rotating into Earth's view is expected to result in further volatility on the HF bands. After almost six and a half years in orbit, the amateur satellite, EO-88, re-entered Earth's atmosphere and burned up on July 18th. The reason for this was increased drag on the satellite due to the higher levels of solar activity over the past year.

Items for Inclusion in Next Week's Radio News

That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to newsteam@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. The deadline is midnight on Thursday.

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